



Adolescents and Young Adults

March 2005

Introduction

The proportion of people diagnosed with HIV infection in Massachusetts who are adolescents is lower than the national proportion. Within Massachusetts there is substantial variation in HIV infection among adolescents by gender, race/ethnicity and geography. Regarding gender, 10% of females diagnosed with HIV infection within 2001 to 2003 were between the ages of 13 and 24 years old compared to 6% of males. Among Hispanic individuals diagnosed with HIV infection during this time period, 9% were adolescents compared to 7% of black individuals and 6% of white individuals. Additionally, within certain Massachusetts communities the proportion of recent HIV infection diagnoses among adolescents is 2 or 3 times the statewide proportion of 7%. The following describes adolescents and young adults recently diagnosed with HIV infection and those living with HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts.

General Statistics:

- Within the three year period 2001 to 2003, 190 adolescents (age 13-24 years) were diagnosed with HIV infection, accounting for 7% of all diagnoses reported in Massachusetts.
- As of July 1, 2004, 263 (2%) people living with HIV/AIDS were 13-24 years old. Of people living with HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts, 1,397 (10%) were diagnosed with HIV infection at ages 13-24 years.

Regional Distribution:

Among Health Service Regions (HSRs), the Western and Boston HSRs have the largest proportions of adolescents among persons diagnosed with HIV infection within the years 2001 to 2003 at 9% and 8% of diagnoses, respectively.

Within the years 2001 to 2003, the city of Boston had the largest number of people diagnosed with HIV infection at ages 13-24 years at 59 (7% of HIV infections diagnosed).

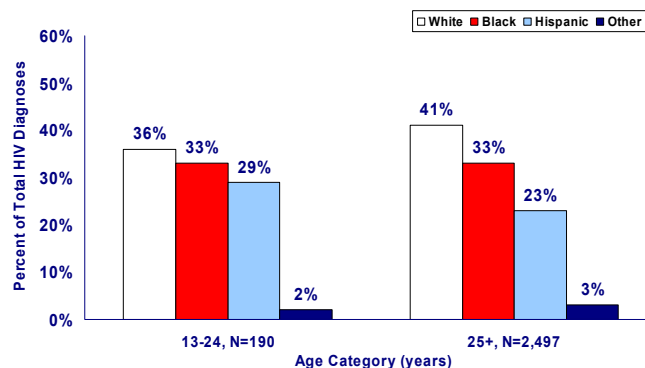
Among cities with over 20 people diagnosed with HIV infection within the three year period 2001 to 2003, the following have the highest proportions diagnosed during adolescence (N=number of adolescents diagnosed):

Chelsea	18%	(N=7)
Holyoke	15%	(N=7)
Medford	15%	(N=4)
Lawrence	12%	(N=6)
Waltham	8%	(N=3)

Race and Ethnicity:

- Among adolescents diagnosed with HIV infection within the years 2001 to 2003, 29% are Hispanic, compared to 23% of people diagnosed at age 25 years or above.
- Among adolescents living with HIV/AIDS as of 7/1/04, 35% are Hispanic, compared to 24% of people 25 years or older.

Figure 1 People Diagnosed with HIV Infection Within the Years 2001 to 2003 by Age at HIV Diagnosis and Race/Ethnicity: MA

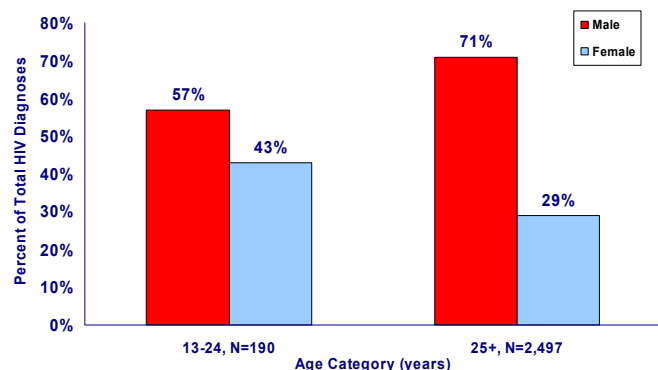


Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program, Data as of 7/1/04

Gender:

- Adolescents diagnosed with HIV infection within the years 2001 to 2003 were 57% male and 43% female. In contrast, 71% of people diagnosed with HIV infection at age 25 years or above are male and 29% are female.

Figure 2 People Diagnosed with HIV Infection Within the Years 2001 to 2003 by Age at HIV Diagnosis and Gender: MA



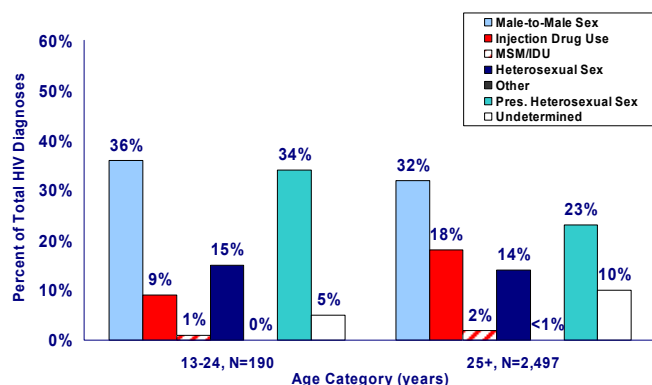
Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program, Data as of 7/1/04

- Among individuals living with HIV/AIDS who were ages 13-24 years on 7/1/04, 48% are female, compared to 28% of age 25 years and older.

Exposure Mode:

- A greater proportion of adolescents recently diagnosed with HIV infection were exposed through male-to-male sex, heterosexual sex or presumed heterosexual sex than people diagnosed at age 25 years or above. A smaller proportion were exposed through injection drug use.

Figure 3 People Diagnosed with HIV Infection Within the Years 2001 to 2003 by Age at HIV Diagnosis and Mode of Exposure: MA



Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program, Data as of 7/1/04

- A higher proportion of adolescent males (age 13-24 years) diagnosed with HIV infection within the years 2001 to 2003 were exposed to HIV through male-to-male sex than men age 25 years and above (63% vs. 45%). Conversely, a lower proportion were exposed through injection drug use (10% among 13-24 year olds vs. 18% among 25+ year olds).
- A larger proportion of adolescent females (age 13-24 years) diagnosed with HIV infection within the years 2001 to 2003 were exposed to HIV through heterosexual sex with partners of unknown risk and HIV status (presumed heterosexual sex) than women age 25 years and above (57% vs. 40%). Conversely, a smaller proportion were exposed through injection drug use (9% among 13-24 year olds vs. 17% among 25+ year olds).

Adolescents Exposed to HIV Infection Perinatally:

- Among 257 children and young adults living with HIV/AIDS who were exposed to HIV perinatally and were enrolled in a statewide system that monitored perinatal HIV infection (the Pediatric Spectrum of Disease Study), 141 (55%) are currently age 13-24 years old.

Of these 141 individuals:

- Fifty-two percent are male and 48% are female
- Forty-five percent are black (non-Hispanic), 31% are Hispanic, and 22% are white (non-Hispanic).

Adolescents at Risk of HIV infection

Behavioral Risk Factors: According to school-based behavioral surveys, adolescents in Massachusetts are engaging in behaviors that put them at risk for HIV infection.

- Among 3,624 high school-aged respondents to the 2003 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS), 47% reported ever using an illegal drug, 8% reported ever using cocaine, 3% reported ever using heroin and 2% reported ever using a needle to inject drugs.
- Among sexually active respondents to the 2003 MYRBS, 25% used alcohol or drugs before last intercourse, and 15% did not use any form of birth control or were not sure if any birth control method had been used when they last had sex.
- Fewer youth in 2003 than in 1993 reported the following: lifetime sexual intercourse (from 49% in 1993 to 41% in 2003), four or more lifetime sexual partners (from 15% in 1993 to 10% in 2003), and sexual intercourse before age 13 (from 8% in 1993 to 5% in 2003).
- Among sexually active respondents to the 2003 MYRBS, 57% used a condom at last intercourse – an increase from 52% in 1993.

State Funded HIV Counseling and Testing:

- Of 42,433 HIV tests performed in 2003, 30% (N=12,782) were among 13-24 year olds, of which 0.3% were positive.

Data Sources:

HIV/AIDS Case Data: Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program, Data as of July 1, 2004

Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data: Massachusetts Department of Education, Youth Risk Behavior Survey

HIV Counseling and Testing Data: MDPH HIV/AIDS Bureau, Office of Research and Evaluation

Additional References of Interest:

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For more detailed information and a description of data limitations please see "HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts: An Epidemiologic Profile," available online at www.mass.gov/dph/aids